Facts Tripura Violence - Lawyers For Democracy

Humanity Under Attack In Tripura #MuslimLivesMatter

Fact Finding Report

Date of fact Finding
29,30 October 2021

Fact Finding Team :-

Advocate Ehtesham Hashmi (**Lead**)
(Supreme Court of India)

Advocate Amit Srivastav
(Member, Coordination Committee , Lawyers for Democracy)

Advocate Ansar Indori
Advocate Mukesh

Background

After India's independence in 1947, Tippera district came under the control of East Pakistan and till 1949 Tippera Hill was in the hands of the Regency Council. On 9 September 1949, the Queen of Tripura signed an agreement with India, due to which it became a Part C state of India. In November 1956, it was made a union territory of the country without any rules and

in July 1963 its cabinet was also elected. The culture of Tripura is quite rich. There are about 19 tribes in this state and even today they like to live in the jungles. The tribals like Tripuri, Rang, Chakma, Garo, Kuki, Uchoi, Manipuri and Mizo still prefer to mostly live the forests. The local people here mostly speak Kokborok language. The people of the tribe living here mostly use Bengali language like Sabroom and Chakra. Some people also speak in Rakhal and Halam languages.Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides by 856 km long border. It has a long history of tribal insurgency and armed rebellion over the failed demand for an independent country and has been attacking non-tribal Bengalis, accusing them of turning the tribal community into a minority. There was violence between Bengalis and tribals in Tripura in 1980, involving both Hindu and Muslims. Tripura has never had Hindu-Muslim fights. There were sporadic incidents in 1992 when the Babri mosque was demolished. There has never been religious violence in Tripura even when it was a monarchy and even after its merger with India in 1949. For the first time in 2019 Baidadigih, an organized mob attacked mosques and Muslims. In the 2018 elections, the BJP defeated the CPM-led Left government. The Left had been in power in the state for 25 years. The population of Muslims in Tripura is 360,003 which is less than ten percent of the total population. Here Muslims do not live in any one place but are spread throughout the province. The peace, law and order situation prevailing over the years has helped the state to improve its economic condition. Tripura has been instrumental in India's 'Act East Policy' as it has improved friendly relations with Bangladesh and Myanmar. Recently, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) organized rallies across the state to protest against the anti-Hindu violence during the Durga Puja celebrations in Bangladesh. The violence began with preparations for the October 26, 2021 rally.

Incident

Several Durga Puja pandals and temples in **Bangladesh were vandalised** on October 15 after social media posts showing a copy of the Quran placed at the feet of an idol went viral. In the weeks that followed, more communal violence and attacks on the members of the Hindu minority were reported in different parts of the country. To protest against these incidents, rallies were taken out by religious organisations allegedly Vishva Hindu Parishad, Hindu Jagran Manch and Bajrangdal in Tripura, some of which ended in clashes with the police and vandalism of houses, shops and shrines belonging to the minority Muslim community.

Hindu temples and homes were targeted in mob attacks in Bangladesh in mid-October during the Durga puja festivities over an alleged blasphemous post on social media.

Hindu outfits in neighbouring Tripura called for protests demanding justice for minority members in Bangladesh, leading to sporadic clashes in the State.

Conversations with victims.

Mohammed Yusuf Ali age 40 shopkeeper Rawa Bazar

Like Amiruddin, Mohammad Yusuf used to run a grocery shop in the Rawa market when Amiruddin's shop was burnt down. He has been running his shop here for twenty years, but no incident of such kind ever happened here, now all of a sudden situation turned worse, that he had to see his shop burning in front of his eyes. He says that he has suffered a loss of six lakh rupees due to arson. Though he knows the arsonist name , however, he is reluctant to name them due to apprehension of harm that might inflict upon him again.

MD Amir Hussain 34 years shopkeeper Dawa Bazar

He runs a computer parts and electric hardware shop in Rava Bazar, Panisagar. There are eight members in his house, he is running his shop in this market for the last ten years. He made a good business out of it. Adjacent to the back side of his shop was the house of a Hindu, Manik Debnath. When the rioters were trying to burn down the shop, he came in front of the Hindu rioters and said that his house is adjacent to the shop. If it sets on fire, then my house will also burn. The rioters did not set fire to his shop but robbed the goods of his shop, which included laptops, water motors and other electronic items. The rioters broke the door of his shop, took out the printer, set it on fire, ransacked the Xerox machine, took out electrical and hardware items and burnt it. He told Adv Ehtesham Hashmi that he suffered a loss of about ten lakh rupees but the government has given him a compensation of only ₹ 26800. The neighbouring Hindu family of Manik Debnath refused to tell the name of rioters and arsonist when inquired by Amir but he believes that they know rioters name. And if the investigating agencies interrogate Manik Debnath, he will tell the name of the rioters to the investigating agency. Sabir Ahmed. Age - 20 years Shopkeeper - Rawa Bazar, Panisagar Sabir told the fact-finding team that the burden of six family members had fallen on him after his aging father's health deteriorated. Shabbir had opened a children's food's, stationery and cosmetic shop near the school 15 days ago. He said that the rioters did not burn his shop, but broke the door of the shop, looted all the goods and ransacked the shop. Sabir says that he has suffered a total loss of one and a half lakh rupees. The government has not yet given any compensation.

Munawar Ali, 72, a resident of Rava Bazaar in Panisagar

(A Local BJP wing person and SC Adv Ehtesham Hashmi holds conversation with BJP Minority President over phone, he also condemns the incident)

Told the fact-finding team that announcements were being made for the 26 October misal (rally) from October 15 in the Panisagar division. In that announcement, VHP people were saying that Hindus who would not participate in this rally would be boycotted. The people of VHP had brought JCB machines to the rally. With this machine their intention was to damage shops and mosques. They tried it unsuccessfully at a shop in Rava Bazaar. We, all the men, children, young and old of the village started gathering near the mosque to save the mosque. The distance of Rawa Bazar from the mosque is 500 meters and the shops of Rava Bazar are clearly visible from there. The owners of the 11 shops which were set ablazed and vandalized were standing with us near the mosque watching their shops burning. We have been living here for two generations. We have never seen so much hatred in all these years. After the BJP government came to power in the state, an atmosphere was created against the Muslims. The result of which has come out in the form of this incident. When the arson was taking place, we called the local BJP MLA Vinay Bhushan Das 7-8 times. He picked up the phone once and said that he was in a meeting in Agartala. After the incident, the men are guarding outside the houses in night shifts. There is still an atmosphere of fear among the people. Police are not patrolling the area. Our village was selected in the Ideal Village, such an incident in such a village spoils the name of the village. When the fact-finding team was talking to Munawar Ali, a 26-year-old non-Muslim youth named Ranjit Tripura came there. The people of the Muslim community present there praised him and said that this boy did not attend the rally and after the arson he is coming to our aid. When Amit Srivastava, the member of the investigation team asked him why you did not go to the rally, Ranjit said that I do not like those people. My friends are Muslims. I am also sad that their shops are burnt. In Dharmanagar the investigation team

went to meet Trinamool Congress leader, Advocate Abdul Basit Khan, at his residence. But that day there was a Trinamool Congress rally in Agartala. Due to this, the meeting could not take place. His son-in-law's house was ransacked by rioters. When asked why the son-in-law's house was targeted, Basit Khan's son gives two or three reasons that his brother-in-law Sayyed Tohid's house was adjacent to the wall of the mosque. The rioters wanted to damage the mosque, but because the gate of the mosque could not be opened, his house was targeted. The second reason is that the drainage water from the mosque and Sayed Arif's house goes into an open drain outside the house. After dark, in this street which is of 8 feet, drunken people used to urinate in this drain. A few months ago, Sayyed Tohid had an argument with these people on this matter. After several days, those people broke a bottle of liquor in front of Sayyed Tohid's house. Due to this enmity, his house was also targeted.

12 Masjid that have been targeted

1 • Kalam Chuda Masjid

On the night of 23 October 2021 in the Kalam Chuda Masjid of Sonamora, the wall around the mosque was broken, people offered Namaz five times daily in this mosque. The next morning, the police and the local panchayat chairman, Shabarti Das, called the people of the Hindu community and talked to the people of the Hindu community and got the mosque repaired by getting new tin and wood for the mosque.

2 • Belwar Char Masjid

On the night of 17 October, Hindutva people removed the mic of the Belwar Char Masjid. On receiving the news, the people of the Muslim community gathered under pressure, the village panchayat chairman Subhash Das got the mike installed again. Police have been deployed near the mosque for security.

3 • Naravara Purab Tila Mosque

This mosque is in Bishalgarh, here on the night of 13 October 2021, the bed carrying the dead body, around 30 prayer mats and sign boards were set on fire. After the news of the arson, the crowd of people rushed to extinguish the fire. The mosque could have got completely burnt if the appropriate actions had not been taken by the locals.

4 • Chandrapur Masjid

This is the Bigger mosque of Chandrapur. On the night of 12 October 2021, the mosque's shop was set on fire. An attempt was made to break the main gate of the mosque with an iron hammer, but the violent elements failed to destroy the gate. The rioters tried to sabotage the mosque by throwing bricks. On the night of 13th October, the alleged incident of throwing pork in the same mosque reported.

5 • Krishna Nagar Mosque

The plastic and glass in front of the mosque was broken on 20th October 2021. The CCTV camera was broken and the tube lights were also broken.

6 • Udaipur Kakraban Mosque

(Quran also burn when rioters fired masjid Dargah Bazaar of south tripura)

This mosque made of wood and tin was completely burnt on 19th October 2021. This mosque is situated in the Dargah Bazaar of Gomti. The land of this mosque was donated by a rubber trader.

7 • Chumhani Mosque

The rioters had collected clothes in this mosque and set those clothes on fire. But there was no damage to the mosque. The rioters stole the mic.

8 • Fort City Jama Masjid

On 19th October 2021, the flag of the Lord Shiva was allegedly placed by the enemies of peace at the gate of this mosque late in the night. Which was removed.

9 • Kumar Ghat Pal Bazaar Mosque

On 19th October 2021, the mosque door and prayer mats were burnt and the mic used for the azan was damaged.

10 • Dharmanagar Mosque

The windows of the Kala Jama Masjid in the east of Kala Chadha block of Dharmanagar were damaged. At Dharmanagar in North Tripura, a 10,000-strong rally was taken out on October 21 by different organisations including the VHP and the HJM.

11 • Panisagar CRPF Mosque

(Quran also burn when rioters fired masjid CRPF in Panisagar of north tripura)

The Door windows of this mosque were broken, fans and mics were damaged and this mosque was set on fire, in which prayer mats, Quran and other stuff were burnt.

12 • Masjid Rawa Chamtila Panisagar

On October 26, a protest rally taken out by the VHP at Panisagar in North Tripura traversed different localities like Chamtilla, Jalebasha and Rowa Bazar. A section of the protesters allegedly vandalised a few houses and burnt some shops at Rowa Bazar. The rioters who took part in the rally damaged this mosque, the rioters threw stones at the doors and windows of the mosque, which broke the windows, damaged the stuff of the mosque and a tree was cut down in front of the mosque.

9 shops that have been targeted

1. Aminuddin S/O Sajjad Ali Rawa Bazaar, Panisagar, Grocery Store
2. Amir Hussain S/O Abdul Sabbur Rawa Bazar Panisagar Computer and Electronic Goods Store
3. Sanovar Ali S/O Mushahid Ali Rawa Bazaar, Panisagar, a clothing and footwear shop
4. Shabbir Ali S/O Abdul Khaliq Rawa Bazar Panisagar Cosmetic & Food Shop
5. Yusuf Ali S/O Jalaluddin Rava Market Panisagar, Grocery Store
6. Mohd Ali S/O Faizul Rehman Rawa Bazar Panisagar Cosmetic and Computer Shop
7. sultan hussain S/O faizul haq rava bazar panisagar, xerox and computer
8. Ziauddin S/O Meena mian rava bazar panisagar, owner of 6 shops is the same man who had given the rest to the shop
9. On 24 October, the bakery of businessmen Shamim Ahmed, a bakery in kelashar, was damaged.

3 Houses that were damaged

1. The rioters targeted Abdul Mannan's house in Kel town twice. Mannan is a contractor, once on October 17, Hinduists put saffron flag on his house, second time on October 26, at 12 midnight, his house was attacked and ransacked. At that time only his four-year-old son and wife were at home. They had to run from there in the dark through the back way. Abdul Mannan was not at home at the time of the attack. He was in Agartala, the capital of Tripura. Abdul Mannan is a

well-known businessman and is a close relative of a member of the State Legislative Assembly. Despite this, he could not stop the attack on his house.

(The rioters ransacked the house of Syed Tohid in Dharmanagar)

2. The rioters ransacked the house of Syed Tohid in Dharmanagar. Syed Tohid's house was adjacent to the wall of the mosque, the rioters wanted to damage the mosque, but the rioters did not open the door of the mosque. His house was targeted. The entire furniture, chair and essential items of the house were broken.

(Hindu Wadi goons barged into Saina Begum's house in the Panisagar area.)

3. Hindu Wadi goons barged into Saina Begum's house in the Panisagar area, misbehaved with her and plundered chains and bangles from her neck and that of her daughter. Her house was ransacked and the iron almirah kept in the house was also looted by breaking the goods. The rioters have also broken the bathroom doors of her house.

Conclusion

Muslims are a minority in Tripura and most of the population is Hindu. Among them, a large

portion is of Hindus who have come from Bangladesh. Lately, there have been many attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. The attacks on Muslims in Tripura are done in reaction to those attacks. All the communities in Tripura live peacefully, but the threat of communalism that is increasing, is dangerous for the unity and harmony of the country. Previously, there were not many attacks here in response to the ones in Bangladesh by majority Muslims, except a few of them.In this case of violence, there is a political design.

This has strengthened the basis of conspiracies. The recent violence is motivated by politics because when religions fractures are created in the country, people do not demand employment, development, education but only get tangled in Hindu-Muslim fights. The Hinduwaadi organizations are getting influenced by those people in Bangladesh who want to kick the Hindus out of that country and want India's relationship with Sheikh Hasina to deteriorate. If they get successful in their aim in Bangladesh, it will directly affect the development of Tripura and more refugees will come in an area which is already densely populated, and peace will be disturbed in the area.In November, elections in Tripura of local bodies are upcoming. The division between Hindus and Muslims that will be created after this violence is done to take political advantage. The fact-finding team found out that such incidents could have been prevented had the police and administration handled the situation strictly. Four days before this incident, Muslim organisation Jamaat-E-Ulema (Hind) met with the Chief Minister, Biplab Kumar Dev, and informed him that such incidents could take place and there is a danger to the peace between Hindus and Muslims. Despite this, the government not taking any action is tantamount to sponsoring this violence. There is an atmosphere of fear regarding the attacks on religious places, houses, and shops of Muslims, which is a new thing for the northeastern states. Bangladesh has investigated the case and the people who were involved in the violence there. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, met people of the Hindu community right after the violence. The government also arrested many people and ministers of the government met with the victims of the Hindu community as well. But the BJP government of Tripura did not take any such steps.

We have 8 demands

1. The Government should make an inquiry committee headed by retired High Court judge and get the whole incident investigated.

2. Separate FIR must be filed on the complaint of victims.

3. Due to this incident, all the people whose businesses have suffered financial loss should get appropriate compensation by the state government and it should be compensated soon so that these innocent people can get their life back on track and their businesses and work can resume smoothly

4. The government should get the religious places damaged in arson and sabotage rebuilt at their expense.

5. Despite the possibility of violence, the police officer not taking any action should be held responsible. They should be immediately removed from their post and the police station and a new police officer should be appointed.

6. Strict action should be taken against persons and organizations who raised slogans insulting

Prophet Mohammad in the rally so that the cordial atmosphere of the state is not spoiled again.

7. Strict legal action should be taken against the people who create false and provocative messages and them viral on social media, and against all the people and organizations who repeatedly incite people and create ruckus for the rally. Case should be registered against these people and strict action should be taken against them.

The O/C Panisagar Police Station
Panisagar Dist North Tripura.

Sub:- ২৫/১০/২০২১ ইং তারিখের সাম্প্রদায়িক হামলায় মুখ্য তদন্তের মাধ্যমে দুষ্কৃতিদের গ্রেপ্তার করার আবেদন।

আবেদন কারী:- চন্দন আলী — পিতা- মোবারক আলী
গ্রাম- লোয়া- উপজাতি ও থানা পানিসাগর, জিলা উত্তর ত্রিপুরা।

মহাশয়,
গত ২৫/১০/২০২১ ইং তারিখে বেলা আনুমানিক ৩ ঘটিকায় বিশ্বজিৎ পালিত ও আর এস এস এর সম্মিলিত যিনি পানিসাগর হইতে ট্রেন যোগে এসে পানিসাগরের ইত্যাদি স্থানে আমার একটা দোকান ঘর ছিল সেখানে প্রবেশ করিয়া দোকান বানিয়েছে। আমি একজন আশ্রয় হীন আমাকে সংখ্যা লঘু নামের মাধ্যমে আমাকে আর্থিক সহায্য না দেয়ে আমি একেবারে শেষ হয়ে যাব। যারা আমার দোকান বানিয়ে দিয়েছে তাদের দেখের মাধ্যমে অতিসত্বর গ্রেপ্তার করে উপযুক্ত শাস্তি দেওয়া হউক। দোকানের ক্ষতি পরিমান 15,000/- লক্ষ।

অতএব,
মহোদয়ের নিকট বিনীত প্রার্থনা এই যে উপরে উল্লেখিত অভিযোগে উপযুক্ত তদন্তের মাধ্যমে আততায়ীকে গ্রেপ্তার করার আবেদন রহিল।

আবেদন কারী
Samchar Ali

তারিখ:- ২৭/১০/২০২১

PANISAGAR POLICE STATION
NORTH TRIPURA

Sub:— 26/10/2021 ইং তারিখের সম্প্রদায়িক
হামলায় ক্ষতি হওয়া সম্পর্কে দুষ্টি
ও ক্ষতিপূরণের আবেদন।

আবেদনকারী— নিজাম উদ্দিন পিতা মোঃ আব্দুল
মালিক সাং পৌরা উপজেলা ও থানা— পানিসাগর
জেলা। পিন কোড— ৭৯৯১৫১

মহাশয়,

গত ২৬/১০/২০২১ ইং তারিখ বেলা
অনুমান ৩ ঘটিকায় কিছু হিন্দু ব্যক্তিদের দ্বারা
এক এক করে সংখ্যায় মিছিল বাহিরে
হইতে উচ্চ স্বরে অশ্লীল গান গাওয়া করে
পৌরা বাজারে আসে মিছিলে কেহ হাতে
লাঠি সামিল ছিল। আমি একজন ক্ষুদ্র
ব্যবসায়ী— দোকান আমার পৌরা
বাজারে দুকানের চতুর্দিকে হিন্দু মুসলমান
দোকান পুড়ে ছাই হয়ে যায়। এমন
কোন জিনিস বাকী নাই। আমার দোকান ঘরে
ছিল সম্পূর্ণ আমি এই দোকানের উপর
নির্ভর ছিল। এখন কিভাবে আমার আবার
প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইব। তাই সংশ্লিষ্ট লোক দের
আমাদের ক্ষতিপূরণ দেওয়ার আবেদন রহিল
আমার ক্ষয় ক্ষতি— পরিমাণ
10,000/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা।

অতএব, মহাশয়ের নিকট বিনীত প্রার্থনা— এইমর্মে আমার
উপরোক্ত উল্লেখিত অভিযোগ তদন্ত সাপেক্ষে
ক্ষতি— বিহীন দেখা হইল।

আবেদনকারীর স্বাক্ষর
Nizam Uddin

তারিখঃ—
২৭/১০/২০২১

Received
PANISAGAR POLICE STATION
NORTH TRIPURA

Complaint Copies given by victims in police station but police not registered FIR

8. Whoever is guilty in this riot, and have engaged in looting and arson, should be investigated in the fast track court without any discrimination.

Recommendations

A team headed by Advocate Ehtesham Hashmi (Supreme Court lawyer) and Lawyers for Democracy jointly investigated the above mentioned turn of events, and found out that these kind of incidents happen as a result of the irresponsibility of the administration, along with extremist organisations and the vested interests of ambitious politicians. But if any administrative officer would let go of the formality and would stick to their duty, then these kind of incidents would be very difficult to occur. Even if they do, they wouldn't take on such a detrimental shape. Therefore, if, along with the administration, politicians, and social organisations, the public representativess and local populace would also stick to their duties, this would be a big service to the country, and these kinds of incidents would be impossible to occur. There should be attempts by the government at creating harmony between both sides, and a meeting should be arranged between the people responsible on both sides to that end. It would be better if all the politicians of Tripura, public representatives, social workers, local populace, and especially the state government would start their efforts at improving this atmosphere. Otherwise, there could be an even more violent incident in the coming time. And which could cause unexpected loss of public property. The fact-finding teams suggests that the government compensates the victims as soon as possible so that they can start their businesses and work again. Seeing the anger of the peace-loving people of the country right after this incident, the government should take appropriate steps to placate it.

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BY
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